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ABSTRACT

The British, like the Americans, are facing youth education and employment problems. Recent consideration of the content and standard of education, especially the obligations schools have in equipping pupils for adult life, has led to the suggestion that schools have a duty to meet industry's needs. Government should consider a national program giving a new vocational thrust to secondary education, because, for school to help students acquire social and other skills to help them obtain jobs in the 1980s, education must offer a stronger vocational program that reflects changing employment patterns. Youth unemployment needs special attention because it may condition work attitudes. What young people want should also be considered. Students not aspiring to higher education should have the opportunity to explore work places and engage in practical activities. Education should be changed to include practical activities in the curriculum, more closely associate schools and further education colleges, instill a wider knowledge of industry in teacher training, give students supervised work experience, and provide for student career awareness, career exploration, and career selection. (YLB)

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Occasional Paper No. 57

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL AND WORK: A BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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- Developing educational programs and products
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- Operating information systems and services
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PREFACE

We are pleased to share with you a presentation by Dr. Keith Hampson, Member of Parliament, House of Commons, London, England. Dr. Hampson's speech was jointly sponsored by the Graduate School of The Ohio State University; the Departments of Agriculture Education, Industrial Technology, Vocational-Technical Education; the School of Home Economics; and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

In his speech, Dr. Hampson outlined some of the problems facing vocational educators in Great Britain and some of the measures the present government is taking to insure adequate career counseling and vocational training for British youth. He pointed out that the traditional education structure in his country makes adequate vocational training difficult to achieve quickly. Through cooperative efforts between the United States and Great Britain, both countries can benefit as they work toward solutions to common problems.

Dr. Hampson received his Ph.D. in American History from Harvard University. He is a member of Parliament and was personal assistant from the House of Commons to Prime Minister Edward Heath. Dr. Hampson has extensive experience as both an educator and lawmaker, and he brings a unique perspective to the challenges facing vocational education both here and abroad.

We are grateful to Dr. Hampson for sharing his insights with us, and we are proud to present his lecture entitled, "Relationship of School and Work: A British Perspective."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL AND WORK: A BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

It may strike the right note if I start by saying that I see the British and the Americans as two groups of people facing one set of common problems over the education and employment of young people. Consequently, we ought to have immediate sympathy with each other. In this paper I want to diagnose broadly the difficulties we face in Great Britain, indicate what the main developments have been, and suggest some directions in which I believe we ought to be going.

The worlds of education and industry seldom seem to help themselves. Each feels it is in the firing line as the natural scapegoat for the nation's ills; both consider themselves misunderstood and maligned, and each tends to malign the other. There is mutual mistrust.

Another of the difficulties we have to face is that problems are usually oversimplified and underestimated, and they often gain the currency of popular myth simply because every Tom, Sue, or Harry tend, on the strength of having been at school, to feel qualified to pronounce judgment on all educational problems and performances.

In the third place, one has to cope with the politicians' desire to respond to the nation's needs today as well as tomorrow. In the British system—possibly in yours too—this is compounded by an unwillingness to grasp problems and take controversial initiatives. This is often because of what are, admittedly, the prodigious constraints that all governments face. At present in Britain, the scope for new initiatives is stymied by the Ministers' overriding regard for cutting public expenditure. In British educational policy a lack of political will has been all too evident. A growing awareness of this a few years ago resulted in the emergence of the Department of Employment and its satellite agency, the Manpower Services Commission, as the main initiating force in the sixteen- to nineteen-year-old sector, even when programs have been operated within the educational system. More recently, the Department of Industry established an education unit specifically to promote a closer relationship between schools and industry.

The fact that our school system is financed by local government means that the Department of Education has difficulty in guaranteeing results. Moreover, the plethora of initiatives stemming from different arms of government and taken from different perspectives has meant that decisions are tortuous, muddled, and makeshift. And many of the policies are geared to short-term ends, particularly the need to reduce the total of youth unemployment.

In the last two decades there has been far too much wrangling over forms and structures and not enough discussion about means and objectives. Only recently has there been some consideration of the content and standard of education. Projected into the center of political debate by Conservatives in the early 1970s, these themes were taken up by Jim Callaghan when he was Prime Minister in his speech at Ruskin College in October 1976—a speech which transformed the terms of reference of the educational debate. Begun as a recognition of public disappointment (to put it no higher) at the record of attainment and behavior in the schools, the debate widened into a reexamination of the obligations schools have in equipping pupils for adult life.

What a turn-up for the book this was. Ten years ago, nothing would have been more unpopular in the educational world than the suggestion that schools have a duty to meet the needs of industry.

But in the last four years the Department of Education and Science, the Departments of Employment and Industry, the CBI, and the TUC have all focused on this issue. Yet I am not convinced that the educational world has fully grasped the significance and the consequences of the change-over. It means a new formulation of educational philosophy: It means a questioning of the subject balance in the timetable, of the number and nature of public examinations, and of the existing boundaries of academic learning. The fresh pressures falling on the schools cannot be handled by simply adding to an already overcrowded curriculum. This in turn raises difficult questions about the ability of educational institutions and industrial organizations to cooperate.

We will go on drifting—full of good intentions—unless we have a radical change of attitudes. We have in Britain a long-standing antipathy between education and training that is both unnecessary and harmful. The school system has not become accidentally isolated from the working world outside—it has deliberately insulated itself. Though many comprehensive schools seek to prepare their pupils for acceptance of adult responsibilities, much of their effort is divorced from vocational preparation. A great many young people leave school already feeling frustrated and rejected, and they then come face to face with the reality of unemployment in rapidly changing economic and social conditions. They may lack appropriate advice and guidance or they may lack basic educational skills. All too often their careers teachers—above all their parents—have been uncertain how best to help.

Curriculum developments, pupil counseling, and finance need to be reappraised together. Good practice and new ideas are developing in isolation, and overall I do not regard the provision we offer those pupils who do not at sixteen aim for higher education as adequate for the needs of either individuals or society. And the position will become steadily worse unless changes are made now.

Government, in my view, should be thinking in terms of a thoroughgoing national program—something which pulls all the ideas and activity together and gives an entirely new vocational thrust to secondary education. This would have a far wider impact than any current thinking on the sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds. For a start, the final year at school is a most critical time, but career awareness and the selection of subject options are matters which need a vocational context several years earlier.

This raises a further controversy. Have schools reinforced those attitudes which make industrial regeneration harder? Should the schools be geared to making a change in public attitudes? Teachers and what they teach can have a profound effect on young people's perception of the world outside the classroom. In recent years we have undoubtedly seen a tendency for abler pupils to head for professional and white collar jobs—away from manufacturing industry. It can be argued that over many years the notion of enterprise and the work ethic have atrophied in Britain. This cannot be laid at the doors of our schools, any more than the fact that the United Kingdom is in danger of turning relative economic decline into an absolute decline. But the schools could do more to help change the climate.

Employment also entails the readiness of workers to accept particular jobs. This, in turn, depends on the level of wages and conditions of work, but it also relates to attitudes of mind. A recent survey in the northwest region of England found widespread acute shortages of skilled labor even though unemployment there is running at more than 7 percent, one of the highest rates in the country.

Sustained economic growth cannot be created by governmental edicts, by monetary policy, or by tax cuts alone. We also need a revival of free enterprise instincts. And we need to engender a wider understanding of how the economy in general, and industry in particular, works.

The attempt to create a new industrial ethic may not succeed. But if we are even to try to resurrect it, we shall have to improve the status of business in the eyes of our abler students. The academic tradition has been too strong. Narrow scholasticism must give way to the development of practical talent. An excellent technician is infinitely more admirable than a mediocre philosopher; a first class electrician is vastly preferable to an incompetent sociologist.

I thought a letter to "The Times" last September said it all:

> . . . the whole intellectual establishment looks down on industry ("money making"), chooses other fields for its own careers, warns away its pupils and children, and consistently under-rates the qualities necessary for success in it . . . It seemed to me recently that we present day British are like the children of a self-made man who has amassed a fortune on which they live. We, the children, enjoy an education and cultural life that he never had, but contemptous and neglectful of the means by which our money was amassed, we devote too much of our attention to cultural activities and not enough to making money. Shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations the Victorians used to say, and we are proving the truth of it in ourselves.

A recent survey of business and educational opinion in southeast Hampshire very clearly demonstrated that the mutual knowledge each side has of the other is totally inadequate and that there is a serious lack of contact and communication.

The school curriculum, however, is the one critically sensitive area in which politicians have always feared to tread. The reality is that instruction is under control of the head and his or her staff. School governors usually take a perfunctory interest in the curriculum, and traditionally—although change in this area seems likely—the local education authority has exercised only nominal control. More explicit direction of the curriculum will undoubtedly grow following a new survey of existing provision. But it will probably initially be focused on basic skills. This is an essential first step, but not enough.

One has to recognize that the politician will want to respond to current needs as well as those of tomorrow, when what we should really be doing is keeping an eye on what is likely to be happening the day after tomorrow—especially so now, when a decade of technological change can make more difference to people's lives that did a century of change in the past.

All the pupils in our schools today will, supposing they are granted a normal life span, live out half (or even more than half) their lives in the twenty-first century. The education of these boys and girls must, therefore, take into account the immediate need to acquire the qualifications employers will demand as they leave school during the 1980s. Reconciling the two is not easy. Forecasting, especially manpower forecasting, has never been an accurate occupation.

It is often argued that the traditional "liberal" curriculum is best suited to producing the adaptability the future will require, because it does not tie down children's options when the precise rate and direction of change is impossible to forecast. But whether we provide a liberal or a more vocational education, later retraining or updating will still be necessary. We must accept that schools will not be able to equip their pupils with everything they need for life. That is why, for me, recurrent education has become *the* priority. But if the world of work increasingly demands *skilled* employees, we will do a disservice to young people if we do not provide them as best we can with the social and other skills to help them obtain their first jobs. Otherwise more and more will go straight from the classroom to the welfare lines.

This places the educational world on the horns of a dilemma. Traditionally, we have seen the essential task of education as the balanced development of the individual: teaching has focused on him or her not so much as a worker but as a citizen. It is my firm view that this balance now needs readjusting. However high a value one places on academic and intellectual achievement, there are obviously other qualities equally important for the individual's personal development—self reliance, a sense of moral and social responsibility, and an appreciation of things aesthetic. But neither academic nor personal values need be sacrificed in giving education a stronger vocational thrust. And at present we simply do not offer our pupils a full and properly balanced range of experiences and skills.

Structural changes in employment, which have affected all Western industrial countries during the last thirty years, are now accelerating. This is a particularly serious problem in the United Kingdom where we have not managed to adapt our economy to the changing situation quite as successfully as many of our overseas competitors.

Although our economic position is worse today than it need be, our basic need to boost industrial productivity will intensify our difficulties in the years to come. If we manage to improve our economic performance, it will mean reducing overmanning; later it will mean investing in machines rather than people.

We in education cannot duck our responsibilities. The path into the world of work is going to be very rocky. The consequences of the silicon chip will be fewer and fewer unskilled jobs, those which until now have sustained our levels of employment. Even if the microprocessor creates a whole new range of jobs—and if, as many claim, jobs exist in the 1980s which are as yet not thought of—they will be jobs requiring much higher educational qualifications and more skilled training than half our school leavers have at present. In other words, if we go on as we are, some 300,00 school leavers each year will have a raw deal from our educational system. The proportion of school leavers without any qualifications have fallen in five years from 48 percent to 17 percent. But such statistics hide the fact that the nature and quality of the odd pass in the CSE examination still leaves the youngster essentially unqualified, and the greater the proportions who carry some certificate or other, the more penalized in the job market are those who leave with nothing. In 1976, there were about 2.5 million young people between sixteen and twenty-one with no formal contact with educational institutions of any kind. They—the unqualified or the underqualified—are the measure of our task.

It is not just that technology is changing so fast, with major consequences in both manufacturing and service industries: it is often also the case that the regions with the heaviest unemployment experience the poorest educational opportunities and the highest dropout rates. There is also the demographic trend. More young people than ever before will be looking for jobs during the next five or six years, after which the pressure will ease dramatically. This, in turn, has to be considered in the context of a changing pattern of employment. For example, many more married women will be in the labor market.

Between 1976 and 1986 it is estimated that the national labor force will grow by about 2 million people, 80 percent of the increase being women. In other words, simply to keep unemployment down to the present level will require a massive expansion of jobs—at the very time that the technological revolution is likely to cause a contraction of jobs. Moreover, for the last five years the rate of economic growth in the United Kingdom has been almost nil. The stark truth is that whatever we do on the education and training front will be irrelevant if we are unable to do something about the economic growth rate.

As I understand it, the average U.S. worker already has two careers during his or her life and probably six jobs. In Britain we make do with an average of one career and only two jobs. In America, 55 to 60 percent of industrial jobs disappear each decade—but they are replaced with interest. In the United Kingdom, we are cluttered with dying, unproductive industries in which jobs are preserved as a matter of government policy and consume increasing quantities of subsidy.

Youth unemployment needs special attention because it may condition young people's attitudes towards work for the rest of their lives. It is often the first step towards a pattern of permanent deprivation. In August 1978 there were 200,000 unemployed school leavers. Youth unemployment is a growing percentage of all unemployment—girls being more affected than boys and young blacks faring worst of all. Between 1972 and 1977, unemployment of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds rose by 120 percent compared with an overall increase in unemployment of 45 percent. The rate of unemployment (i.e., the number unemployed compared with the total labor force) for males under nineteen has risen from 6.5 percent in 1971 to a staggering 21.9 percent in 1976. One survey of sixteen-year-olds in 1977 showed that over half of the sample had experienced a spell of unemployment in the first three months after leaving school.

Understandably, government has devoted considerable effort to assisting out-of-work teenagers. Up to a third of youngsters have been unemployed in some parts of the country, and government big spending has therefore focused on special unemployment programs rather than on skill training. Potential political backlash provides a sharp motive for action. However, the question has been raised whether the scale of public money lavished on "job substitutes" results in less investment in genuine jobs. Firms these days seem more intent on creating an "on-going" opportunity than on filling a real vacancy.

To some extent, youth programs do give young people greater self-confidence, but whether many of the schemes have given them a realistic idea of what work is about is highly questionable. And there is usually little in the way of skilled training involved. Can you imagine paying £43 per week to twelve youngsters to count lampposts in the town of Barnsley? As time has gone on, some programs have been refined so that an element of vocational training is coupled with first-hand experience of different jobs within a firm. Yet refinement is not enough. In any case, only 10 percent of the Youth Opportunities Program is made up of twelve-week vocational *training* courses; 75 percent of the effort still consists of young people "experiencing" employers' premises for six months, often engaged in menial tasks. Education and training policy has become tied in knots—not for the first time. Objectives, for the best of reasons, are unclear; and the duplication of agencies and effort is wasteful.

Attempts have been made to bridge the gulf between the various interested government departments and agencies. But I think it could be fairly argued that this, in turn, has produced further duplication of effort. There is now the Further Education and Training Consultative Group; there is the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit; there is the Schools Council. All these bodies are at present concentrating on the same field—what to do with the sixteen- to eighteen-year-old age group. At least it can be said that the other main agency in the field, the Manpower Services Commission, though misguided at times, sometimes stops talking and actually puts money into things.

Established in 1973, the Manpower Services Commission's role involves far more than improving the flow of manpower information. It also has responsibility for overseeing the training and job-finding services; and with a budget that was planned to rise to almost £800 million by 1980-81, its energies have increasingly been focused on special programs for the unemployed. Each year thousands of young people have had a chance to learn new skills, but there are still grave doubts

about the high unit costs and the general lack of an educational emphasis. All too often people are sent on programs with no clear idea of the benefits that would accrue. Frankly, the Manpower Services Commission appears to be more concerned with ameliorating unemployment than with creating wealth.

I feel there is also danger of such an "outside" body becoming too prescriptive. Commission officials, who argue that occupational training should be closely related to an employer's actual and prospective needs, set down the precise ingredients for courses which are run in further education colleges. When 50 percent or even 60 percent of a college budget depends on MSC money, the piper calls the tune.

Educational planners the world over have tried to meet the needs of industry without themselves having the first idea of what these needs are. Needs cannot be defined from on high by bureaucrats. Industry itself must be left to define its own needs. Those educational institutions which are willing and capable of being of service can then collaborate in meeting them.

We cannot set a limit to the number of highly trained men and women a country requires, and it would be a bold person who claimed he or she could estimate the needs of industry ten years hence in a world changing as rapidly as ours. But I do think we must draw breath to assess the direction in which things are going and examine the gaps in what we are providing. So generous, however, are the payments made to those on MSC programs that the traditional educational and training provision is likely to lose impetus and resources.

In 1969, the government commissioned a report which drew attention to the inadequacy of the vocational education that existed then. The outcome in the early 1970s was the creation of two national controlling bodies for the nondegree/full-time and part-time postsecondary qualifications that are occupationally related. The Technician Education Council (TEC) and the Business Education Council (BEC) have a critical role in initiating innovation in courses and in teaching methods and in setting and monitoring standards of assessment. Individual colleges, in meeting the Council's national standards, have freedom to devise courses related (we hope) to the requirements of local industry and commerce. Some of the first year TEC modules could be used for sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds who have stayed on at school, but progress in this direction has been slow. No one has yet made sufficient effort to devise proper vocational provision within our secondary schools. The call for relevance in education continues to be voiced loudly, but no coherent and unified government program has yet emerged.

So far I have been guilty of what I have so often criticized in others: concentrating on the structural aspects. What we seldom seem to do is think about what it is that young people want. It is to this I now turn.

Young people are not a homogenous entity, as it is obviously difficult, if not downright dangerous, to generalize. Nevertheless, I believe one things stands out. In adolescence the problem of identity is acute. This, as I will explain shortly, is highly pertinent to the way we approach careers education. Secondly, today's young people, with all the wider opportunities presented to them, are less ready to be passive. They certainly don't want to receive mere handouts; they want to count for something.

My argument is that the psychology has been grossly underestimated in considering this problem. We are still living in a bygone age in which the ultimate goal of educational advance is to extend the years spent at school. I believe we will—to eighteen, and even beyond. Yet this very notion became fashionable enough for Mrs. Williams, when Secretary of State for Education, to

offer grants to young people staying at school beyond the normal school-leaving age of sixteen. I think her philosophy is outmoded at best, and might even be the result of shallow political thinking. Why? Because it totally misunderstands the psychology of today's young people. It also leads to a mistaken view of today's schools and creates false expectations of what schools may be able to achieve.

For all too many adolescents, the school has become an obstacle to learning. Work, on the other hand, gives them the chance to make a fresh start. It must be admitted more often that thousands of youngsters at all levels are bored stiff by school. If they see no point in doing what they have been told to do, they put in the minimum effort at best. Pupils are playing truant with their minds, if not their bodies. And there are great numbers of them doing that as well.

What so many of us underestimate is that release from school is something positive to look forward to for a great many young people. However poor the state of the employment market, they are less worried about job prospects than about being able to move into the world of work—to "escape" from the classroom. It is not so much a matter of "transition" from school to work as a matter of *leaving* school as quickly as possible. Primarily, it is a desire for the new identity—money in their pockets and acceptance into the real "adult" world. Naturally, those most alienated are those who most look forward to the benefits (imagined or otherwise) of employment. Not surprisingly, we are now having to face the social consequences of their discovering that the reality isn't quite so attractive—that they cannot actually find a job.

It would be unfair to say teachers are the culprits for all this. Teachers aside, there is clearly something askew with an educational system in which a significant proportion of pupils are bored, and act accordingly. It may not be the only cause, but I cannot imagine why the majority of pupils should be interested if we insist on force-feeding them with a pseudo-academic diet. Most young people do not have an academic bent and have no desire to enter the courses which are designed as passports into higher education. Many more young people should be engaged in practical activities to which they themselves can see some purpose. They should have the opportunity to explore different types of work places—to experience the atmosphere, the noise, the smell—none of which can be duplicated in the classroom. Information gathered on the shop floor not only gives a degree of understanding that can never be achieved in school, but enables pupils to learn in a way they find particularly acceptable. It is an especially attractive option for pupils who have rejected the formal syllabus, and it may help them regain confidence and self-respect. The method of learning can be as important as the content.

A recent government survey of pupil attitudes suggested that many of them would be more willing and successful if they felt that what they were doing was practical and clearly relevant to working life. In a 1972 survey, pupils were most critical of the long tradition of early and intense specialization. Basically, the system was too geared to university courses. Statements about the needs of young people must be made with caution because, as I have said, they are not a homogeneous group. But I think it is fair to say that many are choosing with their feet. The atmosphere and the TEC and BEC courses in further education have already proved a major attraction. Since 1973, when the school leaving age was raised to sixteen, the numbers opting to stay on in further education colleges have expanded more rapidly than those staying on into school sixth forms.

Much obviously needs to be done to spread new thinking on the curriculum into the schools. Subjects like science and math can be closely related to the sort of problems and activities pupils will face on leaving school. English and spelling could be taught in the context of job applications; pupils should learn about household budgeting, mortgages, and social security. There is some

movement of this type in the curriculum area due to the work of the School's Council, and teaching young people how to act in the world outside school is a particular interest of the director of the research and advisory body I mentioned earlier, the Further Education Curriculum and Development Unit, which has set in motion a number of potentially valuable schemes. But it is all too slow.

Like most of the others, the nature and composition of this body—its propensity to take a long-range view rather than to concentrate on immediate market demands—accounts for many of the problems. Indeed, another problem is that this body is predominantly further education oriented, as are TEC and BEC, and there has been great reluctance to move into secondary school work. One of the most interesting developments in the Manpower Services Commission has been the concept of the grouping of skills—finding out what skills are transferable. But this work, too, is concentrated in the postsecondary area and results have fed back into the work of the schools.

We must also make a determined effort to associate schools and further education colleges more closely. It is ironic that the raising of the school leaving age stopped fifteen-year-olds from taking excellent preapprenticeship courses run by some further education colleges in association with local industries. Link courses should be able to provide a distinctive vocational option for pupils, and it is absurd that the financing of them should reach the stage where there is a disincentive for local education authorities to persevere with them. The problem here is that they are accounted for both in terms of the cost to the schools and the cost to the colleges.

Too many young people leave school with no desire to continue any form of education; some leave with a firm determination not to do so. We must therefore do all we can to make it possible for them to re-enter the education system, if they need to, once they are in a job. But better educational guidance could help. Enormous improvements are necessary here. All too few know anything about the wide range of opportunities offered in further education.

Many exciting prospects emerge once we start to think in terms of breaking down the isolation of the school. There is already evidence that "twinning" arrangements can forge unusually strong links between companies and schools. Overall, such connections strengthen the orientation of pupils to industry. Even smaller efforts such as giving pupils "mock" interviews can be beneficial. In one spectacular case the link resulted in a donation of a £200,000 computer.

"Twinning" presents new opportunities in another direction. I would like to see certain schools—ones which have particularly strong departments in, say, design or technology, math or modern languages—formally "twinned" with neighbor big universities or colleges.

Such contacts, and the exchange of pupils and staff they would involve, could give a tremendous boost to many school subjects; it could change the atmosphere to the point where technology became endowed with a status it never previously prossessed.

The currently fashionable initiative is the releasing of teachers into industry. The effects, I suspect, may be marginal. I am not saying there is no useful spill-over when teachers return from industry to their schools and talk to colleagues and pupils. But jumping on this bandwagon, which is very expensive given the numbers involved, could deter moves in other directions.

A wider knowledge of industry and commerce should be instilled during teacher training. Careers teaching might become a compulsory part of initial training; it should be a main subject option, and we need in-service provision to improve and update those already working in this area. Technique and enthusiasm can be more important than a brief secondment to industry. It is, in any case, very hard in practice for employers to find a real role for seconded teachers; prejuduces might easily be reinforced.

None of this means schools should engage in specific job training. Even the work-experience idea is geared more to giving pupils a taste of the working atmosphere than preparing them for a particular job. In fact, if the organizational difficulties can be surmounted, it would be better if pupils in their final year could be released for a couple of days, two or three times a term, to sample a range of jobs rather than be sent on a two or three week work-experience project in one firm. "Job-sampling" of this kind would benefit the entire ability range and should not be seen as only for troublesome or less able pupils.

As a matter of principle, it seems to me we are likely to have more vocational successes the quicker we enable pupils to gain direct experience (appropriately supervised) in the world of work. During the last year in particular, school should become more of a base from which pupils can go out and learn at first hand, whether it is in a factory, a bank, a local hospital, or in community service. It is important that students become familiar with life outside school.

It is not always easy for local authorities to find placements in business and commerce. It is all very well talking about the education/industry divide, but we must direct more thought toward the mechanism of closing it. Some directing and coordinating effort is necessary. We need to structure the idea of partnership beyond the present *ad hoc* arrangements. The proliferation of schemes has resulted in duplication and a dissipation of effort and resources. The weaknesses implicit in present arrangements cannot be eradicated simply by more liaison.

Liaison and advisory committees have been set up by the score, but bringing industrialists and educationalists around a table usually does not provide a satisfactory way of translating their different values and perspectives into an effective course of action. We have an overloaded network of talking-shops, generating more frustration than productive activity.

We need a new driving force and leadership. On the evidence of the Trident work-experience scheme, enormous energy is needed to persuade firms and schools to participate, to excite the interest of the local education authority, and to prepare careers teachers for the classroom end of the operation. As a recent report on Trident pointed out, many more fifteen-year-olds could have gained work-experience if schools had been prepared to release them. In 1977 only 7,500 pupils were released, although there were actually over 26,000 Trident places available. Opportunities are being wasted.

The forces of inertia and tradition in British schools are very strong. The opportunity and the test lie in careers education. Despite the force of the criticism in a government study of the subject in 1973, careers education is still usually seen as peripheral. Many of the charges were reiterated by a House of Commons Report, *The Attainment of the School Leaver,* in 1977. Careers teachers are often part-time subject specialists, who have neither the time, training, or resources to do a proper job. We must generate a new sense of commitment. Unlike so many areas of education, careers education has never had a massive lobbying effort behind it.

Some skepticism of the conventional wisdom is in order, however. The formal allocation of a place in the timetable might accord careers teachers some overdue recognition, but to my way of thinking careers education should not be thought of as just another subject. There are several strands that need to be interwoven. They might conveniently be grouped into categories similar to those which your National Center here has been devising.

The first stage is that of *careers awareness.* From the age of thirteen, pupils should begin to be introduced to a variety of occupations by listening to businesspeople and training officers and by making field trips. They should be introduced progressively to the impact of technology. And, as

far as possible, they should at some stage have taken part in the design and making of something. I believe this is essential in a manufacturing nation. Every educated person should understand the role and contribution of industry and commerce.

The second stage I would label *careers exploration,* through which pupils would in their final year systematically explore a range of jobs, not from the point of view of recruitment, but in order to give them a clearer picture of working life and to help them discover what most interests them and for what they are best fitted. The Work Experience Act passed by a Conservative government in 1973 was a watershed because it lifted inhibiting restrictions on the employment of young people. But under this act, "work experience" has tended to be experience over several weeks in *one* firm. What I have in mind is more of a job "sampling" exercise.

The third aspect is *career selection.* The painful truth is that despite some honorable exceptions, schools for the most part spend little time helping the typical pupil to make wise decisions on his or her post-school future. We have to find ways of better informing students and their parents. Studies confirm that it is parents, friends, the media, and influences outside education which exert the biggest influence on job selection, not the careers teacher or the local government Careers Advisory Service. The central problem is how to overcome the self-limitation of choice due to the pupil's background. Young people's perception of jobs is so outdated, and teachers have a dearth of first-hand experience to call on. In fact, the capacity to identify with a job can only become more difficult as new types of jobs appear with the growing pace of technological change. Cheshire County is trying to break out of this impasse by using an experimental IBM computer job-search program. The pupil feeds the computer with a profile of his or her interests and qualifications, and these are matched against the stored data on hundreds of jobs. In this way the pupil's attention is drawn to a range of options wider and more diverse than any teacher could put together or have knowledge about. The system also conveys to the pupils a degree of objectivity that they might not feel a teacher has. It would be foolish to expect dramatic results from such methods, but I think they can make a valuable contribution when linked to other strategies.

The key however, in my view, is to stop careers teaching from being merely a classroom based presentation of information on jobs. The sands are already visibly shifting, but the momentum of change is only gathering pace slowly. A recent survey of one of the country's better educational areas showed that on the average, pupils only experienced two field trips to firms throughout the whole of their last year at school.

Sadly, as I have tried to indicate, the structure of our educational system, the force of traditionalism, and the financial stringency we face do not auger well for achieving the urgency the situation demands.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: Do you see any benefit in developing an exchange program between Great Britain and the United States to help solve similar problems in vocational education? If so, at what level should this occur and how could it be financed? What role could the National Center play in such a program?

Yes, there must be a better dialogue, but the real problem is finding the money to achieve it. I think the National Center is clearly an admirable, neutral ground on which that dialogue could take place. It is a great pity that we duplicate effort on the scale we do. As I've indicated, we have almost a half dozen bodies in Britain at the moment, all looking at the same area. That's more than enough. But they're actually starting where you were ten years ago in many areas. A lot of the preliminary work, in terms of analysis of the educational input for various skills, is in a sense almost done. You've actually got curriculum and syllabus development work which could be built on, if not directly adopted. There have already been a number of connections. Members of our Technician Education Council have been here, and Dr. Taylor has visited us, but these contacts need to be renewed. Progress is slow and often seems inadequate.

I personally would like to see a better exchange of people. I think it could very well start with a secondment of key people, a small number so that the costs are kept down. The National Center could, of course, play a key role. The program could begin by convening an exchange seminar with a group of people from both countries. We could, perhaps, find an equivalent center in Britain that would put up some of *its* research money. For example, there are universities interested in some of these areas, and they might have a bit of money. We could channel money through one of the government's advisory bodies. The trouble with this is that the present government is against the proliferation of independent government agencies. (We have 3,000 of them at the moment and are going to do away with over 1,000.) If it survives, it might be possible to get the Advisory Council on Adult and Continuing Education to start doing something in this area instead of generating just more discussion. If we could get these agencies to sponsor key people, and if money was forthcoming from both sides, I think some sort of deal might be arranged.

Question: Why does the government spend so much money on funding programs to combat youth unemployment on a short-term basis rather than spending money on the long-term solution—skills training?

Well, that's the issue that was closest to my heart as an opposition spokesman. It was one of the major charges that I threw at the (then) Labor government. It's political. It is easy to see that a government cannot afford to let the unemployment figures grow on the scale they've been growing, particularly the youth side of it. They want to try to correct the situation, partly because they are genuinely worried and don't want young people hanging around the streets causing vandalism and delinquency, partly because they gain politically if the figures come down. The Labor government used to boast a great deal that they had created 400,000 jobs through their special programs, but as I have tried to show, the value of those jobs, and their permanence, are highly questionable.

These short-term programs are particularly popular with the trade union movement; since the Conservative government's relationship with the trade union movement isn't too good anyway,

ministers are very loath to create ill will by appearing to do away with these special employment programs. The benefits of training programs, on the other hand, are long-term. The money put in this year doesn't bear fruit until considerably later. So it's a matter of attitudes. I'm not sure that my own government has actually grasped this yet, because we're mainly concerned with cutting back government spending *here and now*. Treasury ministers are not prepared to take the gamble that in three years or more there will be a real payoff from money spent now.

Question: Of those in the sixteen- to nineteen-year-old age group who drop out of school and suffer high unemployment, what percentage are a racial minority? How can 2½ million of these young people have no formal contact with school?

At sixteen, students come to the end of statutory school years and they are free to leave. Increasingly now, with job prospects as they are, there is pressure for them to take examinations but they do not have to. There are two sorts of examinations. The first is the "ordinary level" of what is called the General Certificate of Education. This is the more important exam. It has prestige. The alternative exam is the Certificate of Secondary Education, which is less academic. The General Certificate, the academic one, is really the starting point in the process of going on to higher education. It has been the means of selecting those wanting to enter the universities, but it has also become used by employers as a gauge of job applicants. A mere "pass" in the Certificate of Secondary Education is not really a qualification of much worth.

We also have people who leave without any qualification. Six or seven years ago it was almost half—about 350,000 people a year. Now, vastly more have got the CSE in some form or another, so only 17 percent leave without any qualification at all. But these, and about 100,000 who have just a token qualification, never see education again. It's only a small proportion that actually go on into sixth forms and stay at school until eighteen. It's not compulsory to stay until eighteen. Some, in increasing proportions as I said, are leaving school to enter further education colleges. It is in these that they actually get the vocational qualifications which are assessed and monitored by TEC and BEC, the Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council.

I don't know the answer to your first question about percentages, but I think there is a common problem—that is the minority groups, the blacks, the Asians, and the Carribean in particular who are most affected by unemployment, particularly in regional pockets—in some of the inner cities and in certain parts of the country. But I don't know what the proportion is.

Question: What is the pattern of secondary education in the United Kingdom? Do you have the equivalent of the American junior high school, or do students choose between schools that specialize in either higher education preparation or career training?

It is developing that way in certain areas. We're in a state of flux and have been, of course, for over a decade where secondary education is concerned. We used to have a system of dividing people at age eleven into different categories. The grammar schools, like the one I went to, were geared toward the academically oriented person who was, hopefully, aiming for higher education. Then there were the technical schools specifically designed for abler people of a practical bent. Those not choosing either the grammar or technical schools went to the secondary modern schools. This was called a tripartite system. But most of the country had a bipartite system—that is, the grammar school taking anywhere from about 10 percent to 20 percent of the age group based on a test or a selection process of some kind administered at age eleven. The rest went to the secondary modern schools.

In the last fifteen years that system has been steadily dismantled, and we've set up American-style comprehensive high schools of various types. Sometimes students go to one school from age

eight to fourteen, then a separate school from fourteen to sixteen; sometimes it's eleven to sixteen, and so on. It is comprehensive; there's no selection at eleven. Eighty percent of the school population is now in that sort of school. The present government has said it's not going to force local authorities to go on with this, so some localities will be keeping separate schools for different categories of people. Only at sixteen does the student have the strictly vocational option, because at age sixteen the student can either stay in school for the so-called "sixth form" years, where he or she can either just play football or take advanced-level courses to prepare for a university education, or enter a further education college in which specific vocational programs are taught. No comprehensive schools in Britain give actual specific technical training (other than, possibly, typing). They teach woodworking and metal working in a general kind of way. (It's thought to be good for people to do a bit of that sort of thing.) But this technical training doesn't gear to any specific job. The strictly vocational work—bricklaying, auto mechanics, etc.—takes place in further education colleges. One of the consequences of raising the school leaving age from fifteen to sixteen was to delay for a year that option of a strictly vocational kind.

Question: So your immediate aim would be, perhaps, to include some of this career orientation in the regular high school?

Yes. We need to provide better careers preparation, guidance and advice, and a more strictly vocational input by gearing the service more to the world outside rather than to the strictly theoretical and academic. But mostly, we need to develop more of an interconnection between further education, where the vocational courses and their teachers are, and the final years of school.

Question: Does that entail making compulsory subjects elective?

Well, the whole pattern of British education has been almost totally elective. We've never had a core curriculum, and the debate running at the moment is whether or not we should establish a core curriculum on the continental pattern. If so, what subjects should form part of the core? Personally, I believe the basic subjects should be included—literacy, numeracy, and I would say a sort of technological awareness. Those three things should be basic to the core, but many people would extend it beyond that.

Question: You have stated that unless a radical change in attitude occurs, there is not much that can be done. Do you feel that the situation is critical enough in Great Britain (or here) to cause these attitudes to change?

Yes. Well I think they are changing. I think the sands are shifting. But the ripple effect is slow, sometimes not reaching very far. There *are* people among the education authorities who are thinking along the right lines, but senior officials and, more importantly, the elected counselors have to be convinced that vocational education is worth putting money into at a time when they're trying to cut back. Between 72 and 80 percent of all local government expenditure (and you have the same problem here) is spent on education. This revenue comes almost entirely from property taxes. So you have the problem that central government is trying to cut back the proportion that government in general spends and passing this on by cutting its subsidies to local authorities. They, in turn, do not want to impose increasing burdens on property holders. It's a major task indeed for the exceptional person who is appreciative of these problems and has ideas for coping to convince the local authority that it's worth doing something about.

In terms of skills training, there are competing pressures from the employment side. There are those who say that industry should be doing it or that the apprenticeship scheme should be doing it—that skills training is not the business of the educational world at all. This kind of thinking has gained a lot of ground because the Department of Education has been a particularly inept body, and it has never taken the lead in this area. If it had gotton into careers education ten years ago and set the ball rolling, not only would we have been much further along, but the Department of Education itself would have been in the vanguard in vocational education. As it is, most of the initiatives have come from the Department of Employment or the Department of Industry.

Question: You make a distinction between what you call "technological literacy" and "vocational education." Is there that great a difference?

Well, I think there is a semantic problem between the two sides of the Atlantic. Technological literacy could be subsumed under the title of vocational education; it could be an element of it. In my handling of the latter term, it would fit quite well. I see careers education as giving people work experiences outside the school to help them gain a better appreciation and knowledge of industry and help prepare them for a better choice of jobs. I see vocational education encompassing that, and also giving people a better understanding of how industry and commerce work and of their impact on society. But I would like to make the point to this audience that vocational education in a British context is not, I suspect, going to mean specific training for jobs, because that would be so contrary to all the traditions of our education system.

There has been a great deal of confusion between what is education and what is training. But changes in the classroom would create quite a controversy. One of the industrial training boards (the Engineering Training Board), which normally deals with apprentices, has produced a very interesting curriculum which they've tried to get the schools to adopt for the last two years, but the schools refuse to touch it. They claim that adopting an outside curriculum would be too restraining on their freedom to decide what they believe education is.

Question: What can the schools do specifically to make sixteen-year-olds employable; that is, to give them the qualifications to make a successful transition from school to work? What specific qualifications for employment do you think the schools can help young people to develop?

If I knew what could be done specifically, I think we could move forward much faster. I think it's an area where it's very hard to be specific. I've tried to indicate a number of areas where, if one could make some progress, then hopefully young people will turn out better prepared and more capable. Now, even if you did *everything,* and if you found the enormous resources to fund all these things, I'm willing to bet we would still not have *all* young people totally equipped or prepared for employment. Many of them simply don't want to bother.

Question: After many years of studying the problem, we're not sure what enhances employability, and we're certainly not convinced that we've found a way to bring this about. Do you believe that supplying entry-level occupational skills to fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds will make them employable?

No. I certainly don't place very much store by all this in terms of *guaranteeing* results. But we have such a very poor situation that we can only improve.

I am very loath to take specific job training into schools, because I am concerned about adaptability. I think that students need to have a broad range of experiences so that they aren't locked into a specific job when that particular area of jobs may be starting to decline. Jobs may disappear by the time the students come through the school system, and we don't yet have the foresight or the ability to determine what the training and education requirements will be for the jobs of the future, in the "silicon chip" era. So I think you have to treat job training on a broad, general level. When we talk about further training, we are referring to specific training for those aiming for a particular job and those trying to change direction or upgrade themselves within their fields.

What is quite extraordinary to me (and I felt this three years ago when I first experienced it in community colleges over here) is that nowhere in our system do we evaluate what happens to the people who go through the courses. There's no attempt to find out what people actually think about their training once they are in a job. We don't do any sampling—or monitoring of—the effectiveness of the courses they take. It isn't done, either by colleges or central bodies like the Manpower Services Commission. It isn't even done by the Technician Education Council which oversees the courses. It isn't done by anybody. I you ask them why they don't do it they tell you they don't have the money. This is a very fundamental area which could improve the dialogue and, hence, the effectiveness of the system.

Question: From the political perspective, how do you deal with the problem of self-perpetuating bureaucracies, especially where the educational establishment is concerned?

There are an awful lot of people around who are simply equating progress with activity. They don't care what the activity leads to, as long as they're in existence producing something new. Accountability is an issue which hasn't been resolved. This is particularly true in British education because the central government isn't directly a funding body. It does all the funding indirectly, through a very complicated formula called the rate support grant, a property tax subsidy system. How to spend this money is entirely up to local authorities. The money allocated for education through the rate support grant is given as part of a block grant. The local authority does what it likes with the money. Educational money might be used to subsidize bus fares. We were talking earlier about giving councils or advisory bodies an ultimatum—instead of letting them talk on endlessly, give them for example, three years of life with the threat of withdrawing government funding unless they can find alternative sources. But the Department of Education isn't in a position constitutionally to do that.

Question: Where in the British system does job-specific training take place, and what do you perceive are some of its flaws?

The bulk of it is apprenticeship done by industry, but industry has always ridden piggy back on what we call the further education system. Industry would usually release people for a certain amount of part-time work during the week (that's called day release, or block release) or they would do night work. But day release is at the present time totally stagnant. There has been no growth in the day and block release part of the system for well over ten years, and at certain times the numbers have even dropped because of the costs it imposes on industry at a time when profits have been hit badly. It's a very serious problem. We look enviously at the Germans; they have a compulsory day release system. As I said, 300,000 of our people leave the schools and never come back in on any sort of release basis.

In addition to apprenticeship programs there are the higher level courses offered chiefly by the polytechnics, which by statute were created to be applied institutions concerned specifically

with vocational courses. However, many of them deal with other areas as well. Some people call this "academic drift," but actually a lot of the reason for this is the "inheritance" factor. When you put together ten separate little colleges and create one big polytechnic, you end up with all sorts of interesting situations. To give you an example, Middlesex Polytechnic inherited the largest philosophy department outside the University of Oxford. It's very difficult to get philosophers to teach much in the applied areas, so they have some problems.

The major factor is, and you made the point yourself, that the largest area for employment in Britain is firms that hire under fifty employees. It's only being recognized now that these firms are not capable of doing their own training. They're not prepared to release people to further education, either, and that is a major area we need to operate on.

Question: Would you comment on what the local communities are doing to take responsibility for youth? I am especially interested in the area of voluntarism.

I think it's a sad area, really, and it's partly a political problem tied to budget cuts. When central government decrees to the local government that money is going to have to be cut back, local government politicians have to respond somehow. The tendency is to leave the compulsory school years (five to sixteen) intact. They usually feel that standards in that area have to be preserved. Of course, that's the most politically sensitive area, too, but that's where all the money is. Since approximately 60 percent of the educational budget is spent on teachers' salaries, that's the area the politicians touch last. Instead, they make cuts in other areas. They make massive cuts in the nursery provision—the under-fives and the pre-schools. They cut the further education student grants about which I get very distressed, because I believe vocational education needs to offer carrots to attract students. Otherwise they get more money going on welfare, for just doing nothing. But if they take a full-time skill course in a training institute or vocational college, they don't get *any* money. It's a topsy-turvey situation. It seems to me you have to offer them some incentive, but that's the one area that's cut because it's in the "discretionary" area for the local authorities. Then they cut the size of the colleges, and then they cut the voluntary money, the small sums they usually have available to help along the voluntary bodies as a cat[illegible] for them. When they start cutting this money (and most local authorities do this), the voluntary effort falls off.

I'm afraid we've never exploited voluntary and private agencies as we should have. The present government is looking into this because it believes that one of the government's objectives should be to put public money into things in such as way that private and voluntary effort and money will follow. We are getting away from the notion that the state can do it all. Rather, the role of government should be to get activities moving by stimulating them with small amounts of local government money. Hopefully, we will be looking more toward voluntarism. There are certainly organizations like the Community Voluntary Service which have done very good work in pilot schemes. This organization has proved that there is a major area of community service and voluntary work which is very appealing to young people, but it has never been taken up by government. I would like to feel that we are not going to cut these things so severely that they suffer and die, but that we will maintain a certain flow of money, albeit small. Although I mentioned it in my paper, it is actually a very small area indeed. We haven't in fact done what we should have done in that area.

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